

Military Sealift Command

*Civil service careers
for merchant mariners.*

by CAPTAIN THOMAS FINGER

U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command (MSC) provides ocean transportation services for the Department of Defense and delivers equipment, fuel, supplies, and ammunition to sustain U.S. forces worldwide. In addition to providing point-to-point ocean transportation of Department of Defense cargo, MSC provides prepositioning ships readied with U.S. military supplies and equipment, special mission ships to support DOD agencies, and combat logistics vessels offering support to U.S. Navy ships at sea.

MSC has a diversified fleet of government-owned and -operated ships involved in a variety of missions. This growing fleet includes:

- ammunition ships that provide Navy combatants with ammunition;
- combat stores ships that transport supplies including food, dry provisions, repair parts, and mail;
- dry cargo/ammunition ships, which are multi-product ships that deliver ammunition, food, fuel, repair parts, and expendable supplies to combatants;
- fast combat support ships, which are high-speed vessels designed to carry fuel, ammunition, and supplies;
- underway replenishment oilers that deliver fuel to Navy combat ships and jet fuel for aircraft aboard carriers at sea;
- fleet ocean tugs that provide towing services and operate as platforms for Navy divers;

CAREERS



At the engine room consol, Third Assistant Engineer Breide Charbonnet has responsibility for the engine watch section. Engineers within MSC's civil service mariner cadre have unique opportunities to gain experience across a broad range of power plants. All photos courtesy of Military Sealift Fleet Support Command.

- hospital ships that serve as emergency onsite trauma centers for the care of combatant forces and, as required, for humanitarian relief;
- rescue/salvage ships that assist in rescue and salvage missions;
- cable ships that install ocean cables and provide advanced remotely operated vehicle capability to U.S. Navy agencies.

CIVMARs

Seafarers aboard this diverse range of ships have careers as civil service mariners (CIVMARs) of the federal government. CIVMARs have excellent job security, oppor-



Chief Mate Mike Keller at the helm of one of two launch boats assigned to USNS *Mercy*, one of two U.S. Navy hospital ships crewed by civil service mariners.

tunities for merchant marine license and document upgrades, promotion potential, and good pay. Benefits include health and life insurance, retirement plans, and annual and sick leave programs commensurate with their civil service counterparts ashore.

With respect to leave, civil service mariners earn, on average, two to three weeks vacation time per four-month tour aboard ship.¹ CIVMARs, uniquely, also accrue shore

With an afloat CIVMAR workforce of approximately 5,000, there are a wide variety of positions and promotion opportunities available to the mariner. To apply for employment with the Military Sealift Command, all candidates must be:

- at least 18 years of age;
- a United States citizen with a valid U.S. passport;
- capable of speaking, understanding, reading, and writing the English language;
- able to obtain a merchant mariner's document issued by the United States Coast Guard to mariners sailing aboard all U.S.-flagged vessels;
- able to obtain a Transportation Worker's Identification Credential issued by the Transportation Security Administration;
- capable of passing a Military Sealift Command-administered physical examination;²
- drug-free (must submit to urinalysis in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services guidelines);
- able to obtain and maintain a security clearance.

How to Apply

Individuals interested in applying to MSC for a civil service mariner position should peruse MSC's recruiting website, www.sealiftcommand.com. A one-stop shop, the website provides information about upcoming job fairs, current vacancy announcements, and application assistance.

Once a mariner has been hired, MSC provides initial training, which is conducted at Military Sealift Command schools in Freehold, N.J., or San Diego, Calif. Additional paid training and upgrade opportunities are based on position held, ship requirements, initiative, and the ability to advance to the next higher-rated position through the merit promotion process.

Once Aboard

Living conditions on MSC ships generally meet or exceed current maritime industry standards. CIVMARs generally have private or semi-private staterooms and three meals a day prepared by a staff of highly trained food service personnel. The majority of Military Sealift Command ships also have lounge, library, and weight room facilities to use during leisure hours. E-mail is also available.



Third Mate Tim Christensen enjoys a unique opportunity to stand bridge watch on a variety of ships with diverse missions while pursuing his civil service career.

leave. Shore leave is accrued at a rate of one day for every 15 calendar days on one or more extended voyages on MSC oceangoing ships. The combination of annual and shore leave provides for vacation periods between assignments.

continued on page 16

Military Sealift Command Shipboard Departments

Deck

Members of the deck department are responsible for the underway replenishment rigs, dry/liquid cargo handling, forklift operations, and helicopter flight deck operations. They also stand watch while in port or at sea, and perform routine deck maintenance such as cleaning, painting, chipping, and preserving the ship. All watchstanding positions in the deck department require Standards of Training, Certification & Watchkeeping (STCW 95) with Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch (RFPNW).

Licensed positions:

- second officer
- third officer

Unlicensed positions:

- able seaman
- ordinary seaman

Engine

Engine department members are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the ship's machinery, including material-handling equipment, elevators, and winches. They also fabricate replacement parts utilizing various types of machinery and stand watch in the engine room. All watchstanding positions in the engine department require Standards of Training, Certification & Watchkeeping (STCW 95) with Rating Forming Part of an Engineering Watch (RFPEW). Possession of a Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED) Any Rating endorsement meets basic eligibility for all unlicensed positions in the engine department.

Licensed positions:

- second assistant engineer
- third assistant engineer

Unlicensed positions:

- unlicensed junior engineer
- refrigeration engineer
- electronics technician
- electrician
- second electrician
- engine utilityman
- pumpman

- deck engineer machinist
- wiper

Supply

Members are responsible for the daily provisions of food and supplies; for cooking, baking, and food preparation; for performing inventory; and for storekeeping duties such as cargo handling, recordkeeping receipt, and stowage and issuance of all stores. The supply department also cleans and maintains the staterooms and passageways, and is responsible for the ship's laundry. All positions in the supply department require entry-level endorsements¹ only.

Positions:

- junior supply officer
- yeoman storekeeper
- assistant yeoman storekeeper
- steward cook
- chief cook
- second cook
- cook/baker
- assistant cook
- supply utilityman

Communications

Members are responsible for the operation and maintenance of the ship's military communication suites and for communications planning, administration, and watch. All positions in the communications department and other shipboard positions listed require entry-level endorsements only.

Positions:

- first radio electronics technician
- second radio electronics technician

Other shipboard positions:

- medical services officer
- purser

In addition to one's primary position, MSC offers interested applicants an opportunity to serve in the surface rescue swimmer program as a collateral duty. Contact a recruiter for additional requirements/qualifications.

Endnote:

¹ See www.uscg.mil/nmc for information.

A shipboard tour is a minimum of four months. At the completion of the four-month tour, CIVMARs may elect to continue their assignment aboard, transfer to another ship, take a training class, or go on earned leave. Civil service mariners are paid a base salary and earned overtime. Overtime is earned for work performed in excess of eight hours per day and for work performed on weekends and holidays.

With a diverse range of ships and missions, interesting work, opportunities for further training and upward mobility, and a federal government career providing benefits such as health insurance and retirement packages, CIVMARs have interesting and secure careers at sea, and are an important part of today's Navy. If you'd like to learn more about MSC, please visit www.msc.navy.mil.



Chief Cook Simie Dollano (right) and Second Cook Floyd McCleave prepare lunch for the crew. Civil service mariner-crewed ships offer nutritious meals, including those featured in "healthy heart" programs.

About the author:

Captain Thomas Finger has been a Military Sealift Command civil service mariner for 29 years. Master of 14 ships during his career, Captain Finger is temporarily working ashore at Military Sealift Fleet Support Command's Norfolk, Va., headquarters, where he serves as the liaison between the command's leadership and Atlantic-based afloat masters.

Endnotes:

- ¹ Annual leave is earned based upon years of service. CIVMARs with fewer than three years of service accrue 13 days annual leave per year, 20 days annually are earned by CIVMARs with at least three but less than 15 years of service, and CIVMARs with 15 or more years of service earn 26 days of annual leave per year.
- ² Due to strenuous shipboard duties and extended periods at sea, all applicants must meet MSC medical requirements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Military Sealift Command
CIVMAR Support Center
6353 Center Drive, Building 8
Suite 202
Norfolk, VA 23502
(866) 562-7672
www.sealiftcommand.com

Public Affairs
Military Sealift Fleet Support Command
Bldg SP 312, 518 A Street
Norfolk, VA 23511
(757) 443-2710

Marine Employment Opportunities:
(877) JOBS-MSC

U.S. Coast Guard
National Maritime Center
100 Forbes Blvd.
Martinsburg, WV 25404
(304) 433-3400
Help Desk (888) 427-5662
www.uscg.mil/nmc